



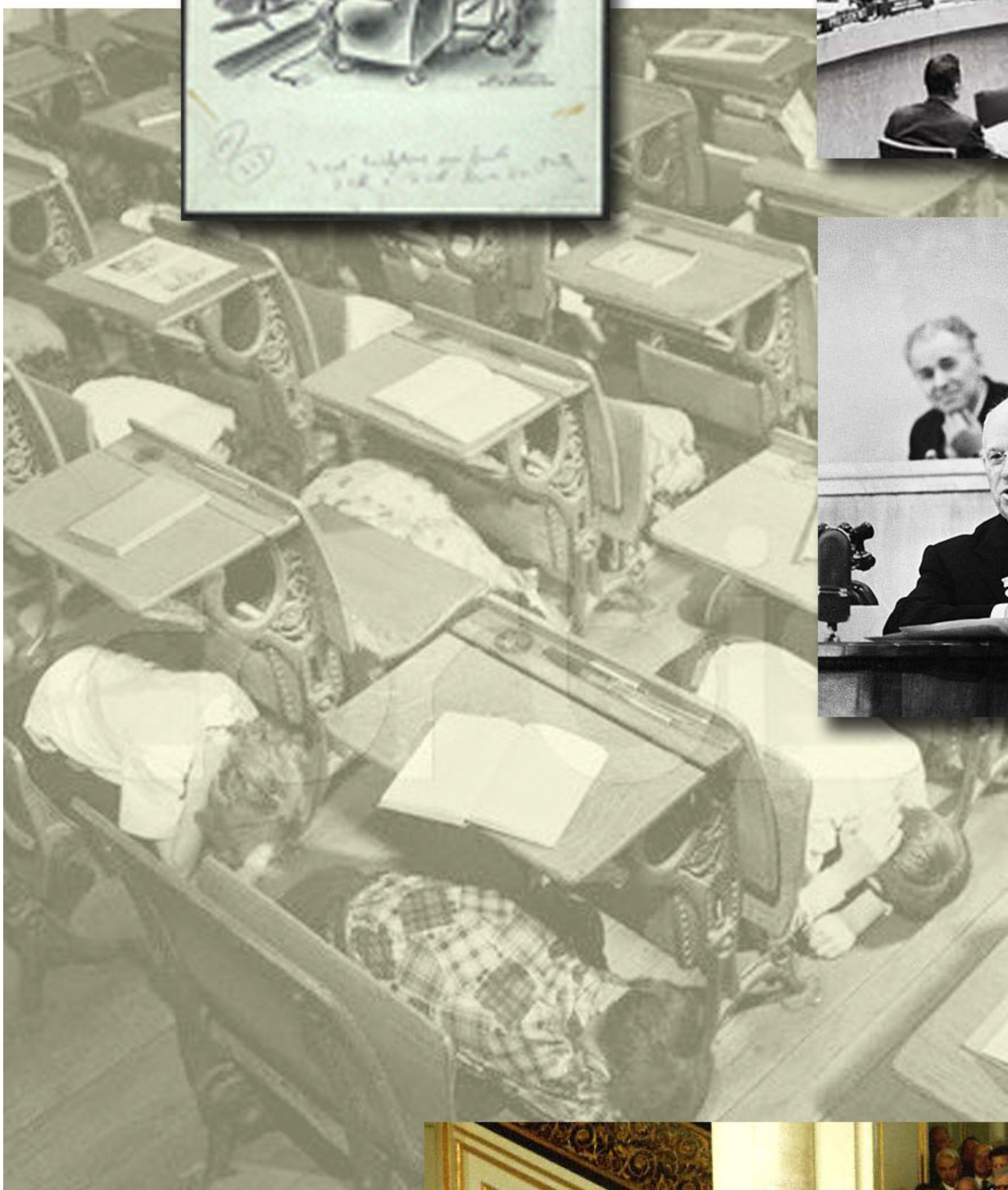
COLD WAR

LIVING ON THE BRINK

The United States stopped the carnage of World War II by exploding a deadly new weapon – the atomic bomb – on Japan, the remaining Axis command. That demonstration of unparalleled U.S. power, combined with Stalin's aggressive post-war takeover of Eastern Europe, ended cooperation and started the Cold War.

The Soviet Union soon had its own superpower weapons and the two nations settled into decades of belligerent suspicion, marked by spying, proxy wars of influence, and a nuclear arms race – the latter requiring a direct phone line between the Kremlin and White House to prevent accidental, joint annihilating attacks.

The precariousness of the doctrine of mutual assured destruction – highlighted by a 1961 ultimatum by President John Kennedy to halt the Soviets' placement of nuclear missiles in Cuba, 90 miles from U.S. shores – eventually brought both nations to the negotiating table, resulting in a series of important nuclear arms reduction treaties.



Top left: Editorial cartoon, "TICK-TOCK TICK-TOCK," 1949. Middle left: Nuclear war preparedness exercise in a school classroom, 1951. Top right: The U.S. delegation to the U.N. presents evidence of Soviet missiles in Cuba, 1962. Middle right: Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev shows photos from a downed U.S. spy plane to Kremlin officials, 1960. Bottom right: White House/Kremlin "hot line," 1963. Bottom center: President Richard Nixon and Communist Party Leader Leonid Brezhnev sign the Strategic Arms Limitations Interim Agreement in Moscow, 1972.